

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 /077 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9302

INFO USICA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 6129

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINR, SCUL, SOPN, AF

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

1. I CALLED THURSDAY, JULY 27, ON MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE, MOH. HASAN BAREQ SHAFIEE, ACCOMPANIED BY PAO. HOUR LONG CONVERSATION WAS ORDIAL THROUGHOUT. MINISTER SEEMED ATTUNED TO NUANCES OF POINTS RAISED AND AFTER NEARLY THREE MONTHS IN OFFICE GAVE IMPRESSION OF CONFIDENT COMMAND OVER BUSINESS OF HIS MINISTRY.

2. THE MINISTER RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO MY OPENING REMARKS ON AMERICAN AIMS IN AFGHANISTAN, AND OBSERVED THAT THRUST OF AMERICAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, WHICH ARE INTENDED TO HELP NEEDIEST PORTIONS OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION, SHOULD ACCORD WELL WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE DRA. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WAS AMONG THE MOST ACTIVE IN THE CONDUCT OF CULTURAL RELATIONS AND INFORMATION ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTAN AND SAID HE HOPED IT WOULD BECOME EVEN MORE ACTIVE. HE HAD NO DIFFICULTY WITH ANYTHING WE WERE DOING IN THE FIELD, BUT WISHED WE WOULD OFFER MORE CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS AT HIS MINISTRY'S PRINCIAPL THEATER AND THOUGHT THAT EXCHANGES MIGHT BE EXPANDED THROUGH A CULTURAL AGREEMENT. HE WELCOMED OUR RECENT INVITATION TO THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY TO
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VISIT THE U.S. (ON AN IV GRANT) AND WOULD LIKE TO SEND ADDITIONAL KEY STAFF ON SHORT INTRODUCTORY VISITS TO THE U.S. OF THIS KIND. I COMMENTED ON IMPORTANCE OF HELMAND VALLEY IN DRA DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND MENTIONED HELMAND VALLEY VALLEY FILM THAT ICA IS PRODUCING. MINISTER SAID HE AGREED THAT HELMAND PROJECT WAS SIGNIFICANT AND SUCCESSFUL AND THAT HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SEEING PREVIEW OF FILM. HE SAW NO OBSTACLE TO ITS USE IN AFGHANISTAN, BUT ASKED

THAT WE CHECK THIS OUT WITH THE MINISTRY FOR TV AND RADIO.

3. ON SUBJECT OF PRESS, WHICH IN COMMENTARY ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS SINCE REVOLUTION HERE HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN LINE SIMILAR TO SOVIETS ON INDICATIVE ISSUES, I EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WE WOULD IN FUTURE OBSERVE SOME BALANCE CONSISTENT WITH GOVERNMENT'S STATED POLICY ON NON-ALIGNMENT. BAREQ SHAFIEE COMMENTED THAT FOREIGN POLICY REFLECTS A COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC CIRCUMSTANCES. HE EXPECTED THAT WE WOULD FIND HIS GOVERNMENT'S ASSERTIONS OF NON-ALIGNMENT BORN OUT BY EVENTS BEFORE LONG. AS FOR PRESS, HE PREFERRED FORMULATION THAT AFGHAN PRESS SHOULD REFLECT AN INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT. ITS VIEWS WOULD DEPEND ON THE TRUTH OF POSITIONS TAKEN BY "THE BLOCKS." POSITIONS IT SUPPORTS WOULD BE A MATTER OF AFGHAN JUDGMENT NOT DICTATED BY OTHERS.

DUBS

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